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OUR EASTER

1st Corinthians, Chap. 15.

Paul's epistles are the oldest portion of the New Testament, and therefore he is our best witness to the Resurrection. He makes two points, each with emphasis and argument.

First: there are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. The natural body ceases at death; its work is done; nothing is gained by its resurrection, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Obviously, that which rose from the dead was not the natural flesh and blood body of Jesus, but the spiritual body.

Second: there was nothing unique about the resurrection of Jesus. Resurrection from death is the law of our being, applicable to all who have merited it. If there were no such law, there could have been no resurrection for Jesus. Paul is explicit: "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen." No miracle is involved; and no exception is made in his favor. His resurrection is typical of a provision which extends to all humanity.

Is Paul giving us an idea of that first interpretation of the Ressurection which was current for a generation or two before the Resurrection Story had taken on its fantastic form, with its concretions and circumstantial detail? Perhaps. At all events, we thank Paul. He represents the Resurrection in a form we can gratefully accept; he makes Easter come alive to us; Our Easter. In it we can hear voices that speak far more eloquently to our condition, and no less eloquently to all others.

But what does this Day, Our Easter, say to us? Each one of us hopes it will say that which he most wants to hear. And each one is disappointed. For while the Day can be made to repeat the words we put into its mouth, of itself it says nothing. It makes no promise; it suggests no hope. It dawns upon us with its friendly smile, as though realizing it could tell us some tremendous secret; but it is not permitted to speak, for its message would be more than we could endure. Of itself, the Day is as inscrutable as the Sphinx, a day of mystery, guardian of a secret too stupendous for us to hear.

In fact, the chief purport of the Day is to teach us humility, by reminding us that the life we boast of possessing, and concerning which we have accumulated such an imposing mass of knowledge, — how to protect and prolong it, how to use and abuse it, how to develop and enrich it, --- is after all something of which we know nothing. Who gave it, and why; what purpose it serves; how far it extends; where else it may be found; what communication is possible between life here and life elsewhere; what thrilling consummation awaits this ordeal of living; will the consummation justify the ordeal, — these questions we cannot answer.

We say the answer is locked up in Easter Day, and a Celestial Wisdom seals the Day's lips. It knows that Ignorance, and the Humility of ignorance, and the child-like Faith of ignorance, these make up the condition of living best calculated to qualify us for the final answer, when the time is ripe for the final answer. Very well then; Humility and Faith shall be our guardian angels. Yet for all its silence the Day never fails to lift our spirits to a strange elation, as though it possessed "a pleasing sorcery to arm the obdured breast with stubborn patience as with triple steel."

C. E. P.

LIVING IN TWO WORLDS

By Rev. Henry Hallam Saunderson, D.D.

As we approach the Easter season, the ancient question is uttered in many ways, "If a man die, shall he live again?" And answers are given which range from frank negation, through various degrees of vagueness, to ardent and radiant affirmation. Many people who desire an answer in the affirmative are baffled by the problem of finding any kind of proof of immortality for human individuals.

At Easter many people turn to our four Gospels, and read the stories of the risen Christ. And they are puzzled by the variety of statements within those stories. Of course we realize that the Gospels were written many years after the death of Jesus. These stories of the resurrection of the Master were written to meet the needs of people who asked "*How* are the dead raised? And with what *body* do they come?" Paul met that question and said that it was foolish for any man to ask it. He directed people to see what happens in a wheatfield. A grain of seedwheat, sown in the ground, loses its identity; but from it comes a life which builds a new body. So, said Paul, there is a physical body which dies, but there is an immortal life which builds a spiritual body.

Whatever we may think of Paul's argument, we ought to know definitely, and see clearly, that immortality was a major doctrine of the early Christian church; that with that faith the early church confronted the world. Soon after the crucifixion of Jesus, some of his followers began to have, very definitely, the experience of knowing that they were in communication with the immortal spirit of their Master. These experiences were so definite, and so convincing, that these disciples gained a new courage for their adventure of proclaiming the faith of their Master.

REV. HENRY HALLAM SAUNDERSON

Let us realize, if we can, that the faith which the early church had in the immortality of their Master was not merely a confidence that he had a new life after Calvary and the grave. They saw, with increasing clearness, that the *quality* of the life which their Master had lived among men, and in their present world, was evidence that he could not perish. His life had had a *deathless quality*, and it deserved immortality throughout his ministry he had lived with the consciousness that his life was immortal. On Calvary his spirit had not died. When his body was carried into the new tomb, and a great stone was rolled to the door of that tomb, his spirit was not imprisoned with the body. His real life continued unbroken, for it had the deathless quality.

On what can we base today a confidence in eternal life? Many times I have been asked the poignant question, "Why do you believe in individual immortality?" I can answer that question by saying that I believe in eternal life because I have seen so many people living it. What I have seen of the lives of these people is, to me, conclusive proof of eternal life.

Probably the great majority of people, who believe in immortality, think of it as an added length of the life that now is; and they believe that, in the future, there will be another world. But let us grasp the idea that the immortal world is all about us, and that the eternal life has begun. We are living in two worlds. The physical world is insistent in its demands upon us. We measure it, we weigh it, we perceive it with our bodily senses. But there is an unseen world; a world of meanings, a world in which truth, goodness and beauty are eternal realities. Paul made a statement of vast importance when he declared that the Christian point of view is this, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal".

If we think clearly about it, we realize that we are called upon continually to make choices. Sometimes those choices are of temporal importance. We may choose according to the inclination of the hour. But we know that we are confronted with choices which involve eternal realities. We are familiar with such phrases as the eternal goodness, the everlasting truth, immortal love, a character which is deathless, the unseen world, the voice which speaks in silence, realities which are intangible. Yes, we know that these phrases apply to a world in which we now live, but which is other than the tangible world.

Choices are demanded of us which make us keenly aware that eternal right is to be chosen instead of wrong; that everlasting truth is in contrast with falsehood; that eternal goodness is a reality which we can grasp because of our moral and spiritual powers; that the life which we now live, in this present world, is marked by these choices. The glory of that eternal world sometimes breaks through the material world, and reveals to us its presence. For the everlasting world is all about us, and the eternal life has begun.

Whoever chooses these deathless realities is living now the eternal life. And my faith is that, since life can be eternal in its quality, it is therefore endless in its duration. As God is infinite and everlasting, so is the higher life which he has revealed to us through Christ our Master. We can experience, here and now, "The power of an endless life".

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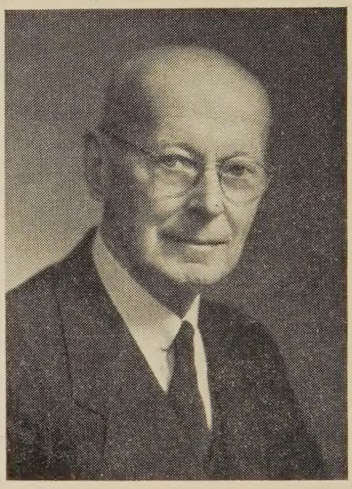
A REPLY TO A CHALLENGE

By the Rev. Charles E. Park, D.D.
Minister Emeritus, First Church, Boston, Mass.

About a century ago the famous theologian Soren Kierkegaard consecrated his life to the task of finding an answer to the question "Can a man be a Christian?" He had already decided that this was impossible for the man unaided. Man is confronted by two duties: a duty to himself, and a duty to God. Failure in either duty is a mortal sin; but since neither duty can be discharged without neglecting the other, man is bound to fail, and is therefore hopelessly mired at the very start in the morass of Original Sin. The foremost aim of many theologians has been, and still is, to establish the blessed fact that man is an Original Sinner. Kierkegaard succeeded, at least to his own satisfaction.

Yet he admitted that it is still possible for man to be a Christian. God has devised a Way of Salvation in which the two mutually hostile duties are reconciled. Through faith, — not mere submissive willingness, but passionate faith, — man may avail himself of this Way of Salvation, and become a real Christian, and go to heaven. Kierkegaard felt that he must address himself to various classes of non-Christians, and show them how far short they really are of true Christianity. First he turned his attention to the "Aesthetic Man", probably meaning what we call the Man of the World, who gives himself to the enjoyment of this world's delights, its graces, amenities, sentiments, beauties and cultural refinements. He warns this Aesthetic Man that he has put himself beyond the pale of the Divine Solicitude.



REV. CHARLES E. PARK

For him it is as though there were no God. Man exists, to be sure, but he is on his own. He is still a fighter, but not a private in God's army, only a guerilla. No one is responsible for him, neither man, Society, nor God. He must decide his own campaign, his own strategy, his own objective. Beginning with his bare existence, his naked "existentialism", he must assume entire responsibility for himself. He is an outcast, a spiritual maverick. He has cut himself off from every external influence, human or Divine, that might have molded his personality or determined his fate. He must "choose himself;" which means not only that he must choose for himself, but he must himself choose the self that he is to be, for now his life is susceptible to no influence but his own, and can be only what he himself makes it.

For Kierkegaard this Existentialism with its attendant self-responsibility for

self, was a horror. He lays it before the Aesthetic Man as a warning, the awful menace that lies before him. And he is insistent that no systematic pattern of human living can be erected on such a basis. Most ironically, seventy-five years later, this Existentialism, which Kierkegaard intended as a "Horrible Example", attracted the attention of a group of men who were searching desperately for some reasonably respectable way of rationalizing and justifying their proposed action. They saw that this Existentialist theory played exactly into their hands. "Life is what we make it." Splendid. Just what we want. National Socialism (Naziism) is the life for us. Let us proceed with its fabrication, even though it entail Gestapos, concentration camps, purges, and gas chambers.

Our interest turns rather to this more recent out-cropping of Existentialism among a little group of French writers and dramatists, of whom Jean-Paul Sartre is the leading spirit. For them Existentialism is no pretended justification for deeds of brutality and bloodshed, but a perfectly innocent and well-meant discipline by which prostrate spirits may revive their morale and learn how to live with a modicum of success and happiness in a Godless world. Most, if not all, our philosophies are erected upon the basic assumptions of theism: God is. Sartre is speaking for fellow-countrymen who can not stand upon that ground. They claim that they are forced into atheism; not from desire, but by the unanswerable evidence of two terrible wars and a period of occupation. This ordeal has told them that if God does exist, it has made no difference to them. He has taken no appreciable part in the events of the last half-cetury. Would it not be more courteous to him, would it not simplify the problem for themselves, to quietly leave him out of a situation in which he manifestly takes no interest?

At all events they are atheists; they live in a Godless world. What shall be their philosophy? Existentialism is their answer; it is the philosophy of Atheism. As Sartre himself describes it: "An attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent Atheistic position." These consequences are somewhat startling. If the world were the work of a Creative Intelligence, there would have been an idea or concept of the thing to be created, a sort of blue print showing form, size and specifications. This antecedent concept is called the Essence; and in a theistic world the essence is always prior to the existence. But in the atheistic world there is no Creator and hence there can be no antecedent essence. Like Topsy, the world is "just born." Man is just born. Our first introduction to him is "Man in Existence", existential man. He is not derived from an essence; but his first task as existential man is to decide what his essence shall be. That is something that only he can do. There is no Divine Thought, no prototype, no general idea of what this creature is to be like; nothing corresponding to what we call "Human Nature in General", to which he may conform, from which he may depart, by which he may be guided. He is absolutely free and unembarrassed by either precedent or preconception. And from that moment he is master of his own fate. He alone must take the responsibility and make the decision: what sort of creature he shall be. He must choose himself, that is, choose the kind of personality that shall be himself.

His decision cannot remain with him as mere intellectual conclusion; it must go on at once into action. He must live out his decision of himself constantly and with all his might. "Complete involvement" of his chosen self in all earthly occasions, in all contacts and dealings with other men is essential. Furthermore, his responsibility must extend to others, for his choice

carried out into action will influence the choice of others, so that he will help to determine a general standard that will tend to become the accepted norm for all mankind.

This knowledge does not lighten his burden, but causes him a certain "anguish", which is one of the emotional reactions he must learn to endure. Other such reactions, in the order of their appearance are nausea or disgust. He will find something loathesome in the teeming fecundity of life; then "forloneness," which is perhaps what Mr. Whitehead would have called the sense of solitariness; and then "despair", arising from the knowledge that there is no such thing as human nature with its inherent reliability to depend on, but only a horde of human individuals, each "choosing himself" as he has chosen and hence no two alike.

These emotional reactions wear off as man grows accustomed to his responsibility. He learns that this Existentialism is entirely well-meant, and aimed at his own ultimate welfare. All it asks of him is to remember its first principle: that man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Then to apply his effort to the right spot, — himself, and learn to live more intelligently and more happily. This is no novelty to us; and we ask why it has become such a popular fad in France. The past ten generations of our history, conquering the wilderness and building the nation, have required of us a vast amount of self-resourcefulness and self-reliance, and have accustomed us to solitariness, and have taught us to insist on our individual rights and liberties. We find no difficulty in heartily accepting their first principle: that man's life is what man makes it. The words have become almost a cliche with us. But we have never found it necessary to surrender our theism in order to accept that principle. Have they never heard of the Indwelling God? Have they never considered that man cannot call himself human until he recognizes a Something Transcendent in him that is not himself, but without which he cannot be himself? We wonder.

However that may be, from what has been said it is reasonable to hope that the picture lies before us in fairly sharp focus. Existentialism is a proposed working theory for life in a world without God, and therefore without antecedent conception, moral law, or purpose. Into this world the hen comes before the egg: fully equipped man, intelligent and self-conscious, comes into existence, the first responsible agent in creation. Existential man preceeds essential man. He finds that by virtue of his existentialism he is in sole charge of the situation; and must assume the responsibility of choosing, for himself and his fellows, what sort of a creature he is to be, his nature, disposition, personality, and objective, — his essence. His rule is that man's life is neither more nor less than what man makes it. It is a terrifying responsibility, but there is no escape.

We cannot resist a feeling of admiration for Existentialism. It is both brave and noble, a valiant attempt to pick up the splinters and rubble of a bombed-out home and pile them together again into some sort of shelter for the homeless family. It is far braver and nobler than the theist who casts his burden on the Lord, and calls it a day. It is not so brave nor so noble as the theist Jesus of Nazareth who understands himself as a combination of the highest and the lowest elements, of spirit and flesh, of God and man; who accepts the responsibility (knowing that he has within himself the competence to meet it) of choosing to serve the will and purpose of God; and who holds fast his allegiance to that trust even though it costs him his life to do so.

A MEANING OF THE CROSS

By Rev. Victor Fox
Minister of Kilburn Unitarian Church, London, England

Clearly the cross is regarded as a means of purification and transformation. It was because this was the actual experience of the early Church that the cross became an essential part of the earliest gospel. It is my firm conviction that this experience is possible today, and that the modern church should still preach "Christ crucified", — without, however, accepting any of those theological interpretations which are now so incredible. The contemplation of the cross can still change men, not, of course, by merely placing it upon an altar, nor by wearing it as a kind of ornament, nor in any magical or mechanical way, but by an understanding of its real significance.

The cross is "The power of God unto salvation", when it reveals to us the grandeur of those qualities in the character of Jesus which brought Him to His death. These are the qualities of consecration, courage, service and sacrifice. Jesus consecrated Himself to "His Father's Business" in the Temple at Jerusalem, when He was only twelve years old, — and again at His baptism by John, — and again in the garden of Gethsemane, ("Not my will but thine be done"), — and finally on the cross itself. Jesus repeatedly showed great courage, in resisting His relatives who tried to dissuade Him from the work to which He believed Himself called, — in speaking boldly in the synagogue of Nazareth to His fellow-townsmen, though they even threatened to kill Him, — in His severe condemnation of the Pharisees, — in His behaviour before Pilate, — and lastly in His endurance of a most cruel form of execution. He showed the spirit of service all through His recorded life, ("I am among you as one that serveth"), and regarded His own death as a final act of service to mankind. When service involved sacrifice, — as it often does — He did not shrink from it. The cross will always speak eloquently of sacrifice, and declare the central Christian message that is is not by force, not by brutality, not by aggression, not by revolutions, not by terror, that the world can be saved, — but by love that is prepared for sacrifice.

If we see in the cross, these qualities of consecration, courage, (courage shown in determination to do ones duty at all costs), service and sacrifice, — if we there see these fine qualities "made flesh", — realized in action, — shining in all their brightness against a dark background of injustice and betrayal, and of physical and mental anguish, — then the cross will certainly ennoble our lives, purify our motives, transform our character. It will inevitably make us more worthy to be called the sons and daughters of God.

But there is a further way in which the cross can help us. It can remind us of those teachings of Jesus, faithfulness to which brought Him to an early and painful death. Jesus thought His teaching tremendously important. He was sometimes so busy teaching that He had not time even to eat. He taught in all the synagogues of Galilee and then, when that was no longer possible, He continued teaching on the mountain side and by the sea. It is quite wrong to regard His message as of little importance in contrast with His death. A Catholic writer once remarked, "Protestants make far too much of the Sermon on the Mount". This idea probably arises from the notion that men are saved by

faith in the cross, and not by obedience to Christ's teaching. Yet it was Jesus who said, "Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord' and do not the things that I say?" We should never make a contrast between the cross and the commands of Jesus.

The cross should emphasize and enforce the commands. It should remind us that Jesus chose death rather than renounce His message. He set such high value on His teachings that He was quite prepared to die, if that was the consequence of proclaiming them. His death therefore gives His words enormous power. Twice Paul speaks of the cross as, "The power of God unto salvation". What we mortals chiefly need today is not more wise teachings. There are abundant wise teachings adequate to our needs. What we so sorely need is power to obey the teaching that we know and believe in. The cross conveys that power. I could never accept the idea that the words of Jesus would be just as wonderful and just as effective whoever had spoken them. They cannot be separated from His life and His death without losing much of their persuasiveness and power.

The cross underlines and enforces the message of Jesus, and in that way becomes the instrument for the education and the sanctification of all who reverently contemplate the cross, and at the same time honestly seek to understand His words.

But I believe that the cross is even more likely to help us to live well if we regard it as a symbol or representation of the deaths of all those many thousands of brave men and women who chose the way of self-sacrifice, — who "laid down their lives for their friends".

The sacrifice of Jesus is not unique. He is not the only example of utterly selfless love. If it were so we could have no hope for the human race.

Many mothers have died for their children, starving themselves that their children might be fed. Reformers have often gladly given up their lives in valiant efforts to save their fellow-men from poverty and oppression. Thousands upon thousands of soldiers, sailors and airmen have died for their country, — and some for a cause they believe to be greater than that of any country, the cause of world-order and international justice. Doctors have risked and suffered death in times of epidemics in order to save the sick. Scientists have lost their lives in experiments which they believe would benefit the human race. "Heretics" have readily gone to the stake or the block for proclaiming religious beliefs which they were convinced were most valuable to mankind. Missionaries have given up all that most men hold dear, — place and power, fame and fortune, liberty and life — to make known their gospel of salvation. There is a great deal of nobility in human nature.

When we have had some unfortunate personal experience of ingratitude or injustice, or when we read in the daily paper of some action of baseness and brutality, we are inclined to lose all faith in our fellow travellers on this earth. But then the thought of the cross may remind us that man is capable of great heroism, of utter self sacrifice. So we are prevented from making an unfair and pessimistic judgment on mankind. We are also ashamed of our own pettiness and meanness and selfishness. Then we long to imitate the heroes of history and to be "crucified with Christ", as they were. So do we come to understand and to share the experience of the early church. We are changed by the power of the cross.

In this year of 1953, in a time of fear, and uncertainty and anxiety, — it is needful that we should continue to preach "Christ crucified". Let us preach a cross that reminds us of the supreme worth of sacrifice, — a cross that recalls the teach-

ngs of Jesus and the faithfulness and fer-
our with which He taught them, — a cross
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— if need be, to suffer and to die, — in
ie spirit of Jesus, — who constantly lived,
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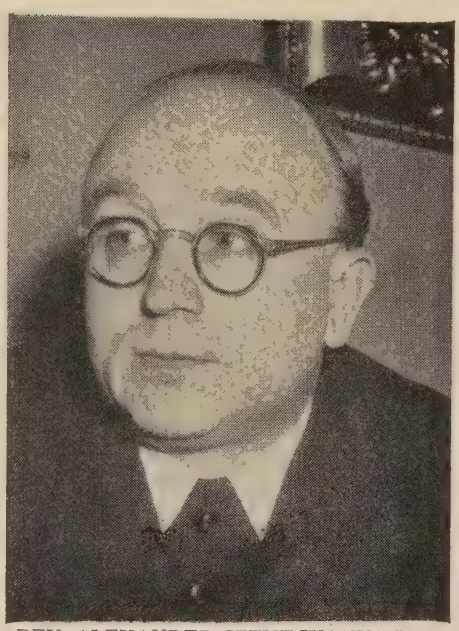
"THE CASE OF EASTER"

By Rev. Alexander Szent-Ivanyi D.D.
Minister, Unitarian Church,
Lancaster, Massachusetts



REV. ALEXANDER SZENT-IVANYI, D.D.

Can we still celebrate Easter? Can we celebrate Easter again? It was Cowper who said: "Blind unbelief is sure to err." The two questions represent two types of Liberals. The first type does not really question, unless in rhetorical form; for him the question mark stands for an exclamation, curved by a contemptuous smile on wrathful, intellectual lips. This type feels certain that the meaning of Easter was proved to be impossible by Science, unrecorded, undocumented and improbable by History, and contradictorily narrated, interpolated and incorrectly translated by Biblical Criticism. Furthermore, they say, the meaning of Easter has proved to be too anthropomorphic to rightly represent God. Finally, it is asserted by this type that according to Social Psychology it is a typical case of the "Cultural Lag", that is to say, it was produced by a pre-scientific and an agricultural civilization. Like the

Ptolemaic Cosmogony or the Alkahest of the Alchemist, the Easter story is beyond debate, "It is a closed case and should remain closed."

This attitude appears to be the contradiction of true liberalism to the second type of liberals, the "Neo-Liberals" "Liberalism once meant an open mind," he says, "and an unbiased attitude, even towards cases which are personally unsympathetic and appear to be "foregone conclusions". Liberals once fought for the reopening of cases, not for their closing. It is the dogmatist who refuses to reconsider, as, indeed, it is orthodox dogmatism that insists on the "closed case"-character of Easter while referring to its truth, "the fact of Easter". If now Liberals join the orthodox attitude, even though from an opposite angle, we shall have two dogmatisms, one as bad as the other. For blind belief and blind unbelief are equally bad, not necessarily because of the content of their belief or unbelief, but because of their refusal to keep their eyes and minds open. Liberal Christians were fond of asserting that they preferred the thinking unbeliever to the unthinking believer. Are we now to assert that we also prefer the unthinking unbeliever to the thinking believer? History has taken a strange twist lately. For the first time in at least two centuries the leading thinkers in the field of religion seem to belong to non-Unitarian churches. As far as thinking can be known and judged,, it is the Neo-Orthodox, the Confessional and the Trinitarianichurches wh c fessional and the Trinitarian churches which produce arguments now--a-days, whereas the Liberal Christian in general, and the Unitarian, in particular, stubbornly refuses to debate, to re-consider or re-examine, and thereby he creates the impression that — in religious matters — he does not think, but blindly denies.

The Neo-Liberal pleads to re-open the case of Easter, and with it the whole field of Christian experience, for two reasons. 1. The overwhelming majority of Christians, and among them eminent scientists, appear to believe Easter. No liberal can shut his eyes before this fact if he intends to remain liberal. "Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto" is translated "I am a man: I consider nothing human as foreign to me". This Liberals once asserted after Terence. What the great majority of our neighbors believe can not be shrugged off by a supercilious attitude. Agree or disagree, but discuss it you must. The regard for the majority conduct seems to be the scientific procedure in our days. The "prevalence in morals", for instance, is accepted for the basis of Ethics by most modern students of "autonomous" ethical systems. It infers that the way the majority of a given society or culture behaves, is recommended as the basis of Ethics for every member of that society. If, however, "prevalence" is regarded so highly in the field of Ethics, it is difficult to see how any Liberal can disregard "prevalence" in the field of religion. At any rate, some ground, other than dogmatic denial, must be found from which we can justifiably say, "80,000 Unitarians are right when they deny what 80 million other Americans and 800 million other Christians believe."

2. This ground was to be found in "reason". Unitarians, at least the radical wing of this generation, are accustomed to identify "reason" with science. For the sake of this argument, let us accept this identification. Especially so, because in this term every field of mental activity is usually included where the "scientific method" can be used. Is reason as science still "terra firma" for us from which we can dismiss Easter as a "closed case?" The answer is becoming more and more unpleasant to the old fashioned Liberal. Hear-

ng it he seems to grow more and more rritable and appears to be retiring deeper nd deeper into his shell of negative dog- natism, the sign "Do not disturb" hanging rusquely over his portals. Surprising levelopments and breath-taking changes ook place in practically every field where he scientific method is being used in our lays. In Physics, for instance, the atom vas split and in the sub-atomic realm the ultimate reality" of matter has disap- eared. With it went the "law of causality", giving place to Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty. Predictability in the sub- tomic realm was found possible only in statistical sense, within the probability of arge numbers. What this single change neans in the field of religion has not been roperly sized up by Liberal Christians. t was used, however, by eminent scientists ike Jeans, Miliken and Du Nouy, to men- ion only a few, and that usage does not avor the standpoints of the old-fashioned iberal. At any rate, the problem of Easter s far from being a "closed case" if we ccept up-to- date science for a starting oint.

In the meanwhile, Emerson said about he problem of Easter, "Our dissatisfaction vith any other solution is the blazing evi- ence of immortality". This thinking has roved to be sound scientific method. stronomers, for instance, "extrapolated" n "expanding universe" on the basis of o other proof but that their "dissatisfac- on with any other solution" made it ecessary. "Religion is not an Intelligence est but faith". It seems, however, that ven those who use Intelligence as the only st of their faith, can again celebrate aster, if that Intelligence is brought up- -date!

MORE UNITARIANS ARE SUB- SCRIBING TO THE UNITARIAN CHRISTIAN!

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

The nominations for officers of the Unitarian Christian Fellowship for the fiscal year beginning May 1, 1953 presented by the Nominating Committee are as follows:

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Mrs. N. Philip Dodge
Rev. George R. Plagenz

It is provided that "Other nominations may be made by fifteen members provided the same are filed with the Secretary, Rev. Carl A. Seaward, 1 Dix Street, Dorchester, Mass., on or before March 30th."

Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman,
Corresponding Secretary
56 Crescent Street,
Greenfield, Mass.

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Albert G. Mason
Rev. Paul Harmon Chapman

(Note: Mrs. Lyman not voting for 2nd Vice-President; Mr. Chapman not voting for Corresponding Secretary).

Prayer

Lord, we have made our preparations for this Day, and our hearts have waited long for its coming. On other Sabbaths we have prayed to thee, but there are prayers which only Easter Day can answer, and we have saved them for its dawning. On other Sabbaths we have whispered to thee our secret hopes and longings, but there are hopes and longings which only Easter Day can understand, and we have saved them for its blessed sunrise. We beseech thee not to disappoint us, but to be unto us more than ever a God who keepeth covenant and mercy with his children.

We have sought occasion to believe, O Lord: to believe with all our heart, even that which seems to us impossible. We have craved the privilege of showing the eagerness of our trust by the willingness of our credulity. But we have been checked by the disdain of our earthly logic, and chained to the prison-house of these earthly rationalities. Let this Day, consecrated to thy Sovereign Majesty, strike off the chains and release our souls, that they may seek thee who art above every rationality, and unto whom nothing is impossible.

We have desired the comfort of knowing that thou art our Great Original and Friend, that we are the offspring of thy Creative Thought, and the instruments of thy Holy Purpose. We have greatly desired thy hand in all things to behold, and all things in thy hand. But we have been restrained by the scorn of our earthly knowledge with its laws of chance and probability, and its little explanations. Let this Day of wonder and might liberate us from the dreary pedantries of our plodding earth-bound knowledge, that our souls may rise up as winged creatures to seek their home in the splendor of thy love.

Dear Lord, we have spoken our human farewells to friends and dear ones as they have reached the bounds of our mortality; and we have sought the only solace that our aching hearts can know in the promise that the separation is for a little while only; that birth and death are, alike, the gifts of thy mercy; and that though our hearts may be dust, hearts' love remains. But thou hast seen our timid hesitation: how much we want the promise; how hard it is for us to accept it. Let this Easter Day be for us an angel sent by thyself, to laugh away our doubts; to warn us that our fault is not that we expect too much of thee, but that we do not expect enough; and to chide us for putting limits to thy loving-kindness, — saying "it is too good to be true", whereas to thy heart of boundless love, it is too good not to be true. Let this Day consummate its greatest blessing by teaching us humility and a saving self-distrust, by reminding us how much there is to know and how little is our knowledge; by replacing our self-reliance by the better reliance of our faith in thy goodness and power and love.

So grant us as those who have been both chastened and blessed, to pull ourselves together, to leave here at thy feet our doubts and resentments, and to go forth on our pilgrim way faithful and believing, hoping and rejoicing sons and daughters of our King. Through Christ our Lord: Amen.

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